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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 19 April 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. DE ARAUJO CASTRO (Brazil)

- General exchange of views (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): First of all I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the office of Chairman of this Commission. As in the past, you can count on the full cooperation of my delegation.

The United Nations Disarmament Commission has an important role to play as a link between the normative discussions taking place in the First Committee and the negotiating phase, which is the task of the Conference on Disarmament. It is suitable that the Commission deals every year with three subjects, aiming at concluding one subject each year and at the same time taking up one new item. We should try to achieve and maintain such a rhythm in our work.

There appears to be an emerging consensus on the need for integration between arms-control and disarmament matters and matters concerning international security in general. Security can no longer be seen in a restricted military perspective. Economic, ethnic, social, humanitarian, ecological and other sources of instability and conflict are generally recognized as threats to international peace and security. This new approach must also influence the work of the Disarmament Commission, not least when it comes to choosing suitable subject-matters to put on our agenda.

Last year the agenda item "Objective information on military matters" was concluded under the chairmanship of my predecessor, Ambassador Hyltenius. The Commission succeeded in achieving consensus on principles and recommendations in this important field. These agreed principles and recommendations have a considerable value for the future, as the international community recognizes more and more the crucial import of transparency and openness in military matters.

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

This year the work of the Disarmament Commission will be primarily focused on the items "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security" and "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields". The work on these two agenda items should be concluded this year. It is indeed important that the Commission now concentrate its efforts on these two issues, for they have become highly topical on the disarmament agenda in the post-cold-war era. It is most desirable that the Working Groups on these two items reach consensus on concrete recommendations that could be of significance for further work in the Conference on Disarmament and other forums.

The third item on the agenda is the item on nuclear disarmament, which will this year be treated only summarily, with the aim of giving it a close treatment next year and then also conclude it.

The question of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become more and more important. That is why my delegation considers that the Commission should address, as a new item, problems of non-proliferation, with special emphasis on weapons of mass destruction. Informal deliberations on the non-proliferation issues are already taking place within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. It is our firm view that the Disarmament Commission also has, at this stage, an important role to play in this field. Two essential aspects of the Disarmament Commission make it eminently suitable for this: it is a deliberative body, and it is working on the basis of consensus. I trust that an agreement will be reached to take up this item at next year's session.

As I have said above, regional disarmament is one of the two main items on the agenda this year. My delegation appreciates the useful working paper produced by the Chairman of Working Group II, Ambassador Hoffman. It is, in

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

my delegation's view, of vital importance to stress the interrelationship between regional and global security. It is also important to stress the interrelationship between national security concerns and the attitude of nations towards disarmament.

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

The parameters of global security have changed considerably during the last few years. Ideological factors tend to be far less dominant in conflicts. Instead, geostrategic factors and ethnic, economic and social aspects have become main causes of conflict and security concerns.

The fundamental changes in international relations have, of course, far-reaching implications for regional security also. During the cold war the risk of a global confrontation between the super-Powers often served to "freeze" local conflicts. This was particularly true for Europe, with its high concentration of nuclear arms. There is an obvious risk that regional and local conflicts, under the new circumstances, could escalate. The tragic conflict in the former Yugoslavia is a clear example of this, as are several conflicts in the former Soviet Union.

There is also a risk that the changes in the global-security architecture may encourage regional Powers to seek to expand their spheres of influence, to the detriment of smaller nations.

In order to enhance regional and national security, measures are needed to promote more effectively confidence-building. To this end, dialogue, openness and transparency are needed. There are no universal solutions as regards regional disarmament. They can take many forms, as shown in Europe by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process. Even if the different characteristics of each particular region have to be recognized, lessons learned in the CSCE process could, hopefully, serve as help and inspiration in other regions.

To promote confidence-building measures, appropriate verification instruments should be used in a more systematic manner. The report of the Working Group last year on 'Objective information on military matters" clearly points to this.

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

My delegation also attaches the greatest importance to the agenda item on science and technology and disarmament. Technology is, in itself, neutral, though it can be used for both constructive and destructive purposes. Verification techniques, including the seismic competence employed by my country and others to detect nuclear testing, are examples of positive contributions of science and technology for disarmament.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the non-paper submitted by the Chairman of the Working Group IV, which will, in our view, form an excellent basis for the deliberations during this session, with the aim of presenting concrete conclusions and recommendations. The paper notes the potential of modern technology in verifying compliance with specific arms-control and disarmament agreements and for facilitating the conversion of military industry to civilian production.

It is also noted that resources currently allocated to military activities should be redirected to civilian endeavours, including environmental protection. In this context, I wish to recall the United Nations study on disarmament and environment made in 1991. Some thoughts presented in that study could now prove useful.

Another interesting point is that Ambassador Erdenechuluun, in his paper, points to the possibility of establishing a global seismological network as a means to monitor nuclear explosions. In my delegation's view, a role for the International Atomic Energy Agency could be considered in the administration of such a network.

The balance between the need for transfer of technology with possible military applications and the need to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions is a difficult and sensitive one. In order to strengthen the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, formal agreements and

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

control regimes have become a necessity. It is Sweden's firm view that export controls of this type cannot be regarded as arbitrary barriers to trade.

These controls are for monitoring purposes, and should not be detrimental to those who need technology and products for peaceful purposes. The task is to strike a balance between the necessity, on the one hand, to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and, on the other, the need for wide access to advanced technology.

The future of the Disarmament Commission is interconnected with the development of other disarmament forums, as in the case of the reform process going on within the Conference on Disarmament. To clearly justify its role and position for the future, it is crucial that the Disarmament Commission continue its own reform process and improve still further its working methods. The demands of the international community on the United Nations system make it imperative for all bodies to do their utmost to render their work more effective.

Ms. RIVERA (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Costa Rican delegation, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and your colleagues of the Bureau on your election as officers of the Commission and to offer you our best wishes for success in the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Please be assured that you can count on the sincere support of my delegation as you carry out your important task.

The atmosphere in which the current sessions of the Disarmament Commission are being carried out is auspicious for the taking of new initiatives in this area. We must therefore strive to give it the place it deserves and see that it is regarded as one of the most important elements for

(Ms. Rivera, Costa Rica)

building a new world order of peace, security and cooperation that invigorates the economic and social development of all the peoples of the world.

Our delegation considers that one of the most important objectives of nuclear disarmament is the elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe that there are two important factors for achieving that end: the prohibition of nuclear testing and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. That is why we call on the international community to reaffirm its conviction that a treaty on the permanent prohibiiton of this practice should be of the highest priority.

(Ms. Rivera, Costa Rica)

We have been gratified to see that a number of steps have been taken to reverse the nuclear arms race, such as those taken by France, the United States and the Russian Federation, which have taken unilateral decisions temporarily to suspend nuclear tests. We believe that this should foster the necessary efforts to bring about a total ban on testing with a view to the adoption of the amendment proposed at the Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests.

Bearing in mind that this mechanism is a vital step towards avoiding the qualitiative improvement, development and greater proliferation of nuclear weapons, the Government of Costa Rica would be very pleased to see the establishment of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This would be a decisive contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

The problem of nuclear proliferation is one of the most direct and serious threats to regional and world stability, and it is therefore incumbent on all States, large or small, nuclear or non-nuclear, to make the necessary efforts to halt this spiralling process. My delegation takes the view that the holding of the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is to take place in 1995, will be of key importance by reviewing these aspects, and we hope that that Conference will ensure that the Treaty is extended indefinitely.

We view with concern the announcement by North Korea that it is withdrawing from the NPT. In response to this situation, my Government issued a statement that was published as document A/48/131-S/25522 of 7 April 1993. It urges North Korea to accept nuclear inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and calls on it to cancel, as soon as possible, its decision to withdraw from the NPT in view of the fact that this is the will of the international community.

(Ms. Rivera, Costa Rica)

The danger of plutonium shipments by sea is also cause for concern. These have quite rightly caused considerable alarm in many countries that might possibly find themselves threatened by these shipments of a material that is extremely toxic to human beings and to the environment.

In the Latin American context, the consolidation of the denuclearization regime established under the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America is worthy of note. In particular, we have been pleased to see France's ratification of Additional Protocol I and the amendments submitted by Argentina, Brazil and Chile, which were adopted by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL); this will allow them to come fully into effect in the near future.

Regional disarmament in the context of world security is a priority matter for our planet because it is one of the fundamental elements that strengthen world efforts towards peace. We are convinced of the importance of promoting regional disarmament measures taken on the initiative and with the participation of all interested States that take into account the special characteristics of the region concerned, are in conformity with the principle of reasonable security and reduce armaments and armed forces to the lowest possible levels so that the social conditions of peoples can be improved without undermining national sovereignty or status.

One example of the desire of States to implement a model of regional security based on a reasonable balance of forces and on the reinforcement of civilian power was the Tegucigalpa Protocol signed at the eleventh summit of Central American Presidents. This model, which is still being developed, has materialized thanks to the regional disarmament efforts being undertaken in Central America.

(Ms. Rivera, Costa Rica)

The Esquipulas process has forged two historic steps towards securing regional peace. The first promoted solving the Central American conflict internally by the democratic approach of national reconciliation, while the second laid down the necessary foundations for establishing the Security Commission as the body responsible for drawing up the guidelines for achieving regional disarmament with the aim of concluding an agreement in the areas of security and the verification and limitation of arms and troop levels in the region.

For this reason, Costa Rica has participated in and has supported the efforts of that Commission, which decided to create a technical sub-commission that, with the assistance of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), has outlined a model for taking military inventories, defined the factors that would help establish a proportional balance of forces in the region and created a mechanism for verifying inventories that is suited to the Central American countries.

These processes have already borne fruit, with Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua depositing their inventories with the aforementioned agencies with a view to their being made public once all the inventories have been submitted.

Similarly, we support the national reconciliation efforts being promoted by Guatemala with its comprehensive peace plan, and the agreement in El Salvador, which will without a doubt make it possible, in the near future, to achieve the goal set by the Security Commission.

Another of the most recent achievements of the Security Commission was recognized at the thirteenth summit of Central American Presidents, held in Panama from 9 to 11 December 1992. That meeting saw the entry into force of

(Ms. Rivera, Costa Rica)

the preliminary assistance, cooperation and coordination machinery for eliminating the illicit traffic in arms in Central America, action taken on mine clearance and the adoption of a thematic outline for a draft agreement on regional security. At the same time, we must also recognize the support given by the OAS, which has offered to hold seminars that would enhance the effectiveness of the campaign against the traffic in arms, and we also hail the offer by Guatemala to make an economic contribution to mine clearance in Nicaragua.

(Ms Rivera, Costa Rica)

The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields is another subject of interest to my delegation. We believe that the use of science and technology should be a means of international cooperation for peaceful purposes between States that builds confidence through the exchange of scientific and technical knowledge of benefit to peace and security in the world.

Science and technology must play an important role in the implementation of regional, multilateral and bilateral disarmament agreements, especially in terms of achieving the objective of converting military resources, whether material or human, for civilian purposes subject to international verification.

In conclusion, I should like to quote from the statement made at the General Assembly by our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bernd Niehaus, who said:

> "All States and all men have the opportunity and the responsibility to make those dreams come true, to participate in the building of a new world, a new international order, and the United Nations, as the coordinator of those efforts, as the embodiment of the spirit of brotherhood that should guide mankind, must play the decisive role of designing and building the shining destiny opening up before us. Let us all contribute to making it a reality". (A/46/PV.11, p.58)

Mr. VASILYEV (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to this very important and responsible post. I should also like to express our certainty that, under your skilful guidance, the Commission will be able to adopt constructive decisions on the items on the agenda. We should also like, through you, to extend our congratulations to all members of the Bureau.

(Mr. Vasilyev, Belarus)

There is no doubt that the work of the Commission is taking place in more propitious circumstances this year. Specific results have been achieved in various areas of arms limitation and disarmament. We cannot but welcome the progress achieved by the Russian Federation and the United States towards further reductions in their nuclear arsenals. The further efforts by States to create nuclear-free zones and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, their measures to reduce levels of conventional weapons and the establishment of a Register of Conventional Arms, and so on, are cause for satisfaction. The conclusion and signing of a universal and comprehensive Convention banning chemical weapons is of the greatest importance, and the Republic of Belarus was one of the first to adhere to it.

The progress in arms limitation and disarmament that has recently been achieved is cause for optimism, but, at the same time, in our view, requires that all States take further energetic action and seek fresh approaches to further developing multilateral disarmament. In this connection, I should like to highlight the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7), which contains a number of important initiatives in the field of disarmament and international security.

The Disarmament Commission has not remained apart from these positive trends. Specific measures have been adopted to rationalize its activities; last year, it prepared and adopted important guiding principles and recommendations with respect to objective information on military matters.

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus would like, very briefly, to touch on a number of issues that the Commission is to take up at this session. In examining nuclear disarmament issues in Working Group I, we feel

(Mr. Vasilyev, Belarus)

that the Commission should begin to prepare recommendations that take into account such important elements as the comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, strengthening the non-proliferation regime, the prohibition of the production, testing and manufacture of new types of nuclear weapon, the creation of nuclear-free zones and guarantees for the security of non-nuclear States and of States that have renounced actual possession of nuclear weapons.

We are in agreement with the view that at this session it is essential to make every effort to reach agreement on recommendations for two other items on the Commission's agenda.

The importance of regional disarmament as one of the most promising measures for ensuring international security, preventing conflicts and removing the most tangible preconditions for the escalation of such conflicts is generally recognized; of course, such regional measures must be carried out on the initiative and with the consent of all the States and taking into account the specific security requirements of their region, and must be aimed at achieving as low a level of armaments as possible along with respect for the principle of no injury to any of the participants in the process.

The second is the role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related areas, where recommendations should be adopted that are aimed at identifying the positive opportunities created by scientific and technical progress in the field of arms limitation and disarmament and by improvements in current control methods and procedures. They should also be aimed at preventing the adverse consequences of scientific achievements that might seriously destabilize the international situation and undermine the growing climate of confidence between States.

(Mr. Vasilyev, Belarus)

In preparing recommendations on this item - as was said at the last session - the conclusions and recommendations in the United Nations study entitled "Charting potential uses of resources allocated to military activities for civilian endeavours to protect the environment" (A/46/364) should be taken into account.

Belarus, understanding as it does that all States must participate in the process of disarmament, is endeavouring to make its own specific contribution to solving disarmament problems by taking a responsible approach to fulfilling its obligations under international agreements. The ratification by the Supreme Soviet of Belarus of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the Lisbon Protocol is evidence of this approach, as is its decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State. Belarus sees that its position on nuclear disarmament is being viewed very positively by the international community, and we are therefore counting on comprehensive assistance in solving the whole set of problems involved in implementing in practice the undertakings Belarus has made under the aforementioned Treaties, and also in converting our military production and modernizing our technology.

The delegation of the Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission and advocates further enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of its work; we should like to express our willingness to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and with all delegations, in seeking constructive solutions and achieving tangible results.

The CHAIRMAN: We have reached the end of the list of speakers for this afternoon, although, since we have a very long list for tomorrow, I should inquire whether any delegation wishes to make its statement now. If not, I should just like to note that we now have a total of 34 speakers on the list for tomorrow - 17 speakers in the morning session and 17 in the afternoon. Although I do not believe that it is necessary to set a time limit for the statements, I might perhaps suggest that speakers may wish to try to be as concise as possible so as to permit us to hear all 34 statements tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.